

I oppose the further consolidation of media. Having worked for one of the major players in the radio industry, I have seen firsthand the NEGATIVE EFFECTS of consolidation. Local input is no longer valued, as paid consultants far removed and limited Arbitron surveys are used to program the stations. RADIO STATIONS, TV STATIONS AND NEWSPAPERS SHOULD BE OPERATED IN THE LOCAL PUBLIC INTEREST...not in the interest of distant shareholders. As the larger media companies continue to purchase stations and grow their influence, many are not investing the necessary resources to effectively and correctly manage their newly acquired purchases. The focus is taken off of the product and more emphasis is placed upon the sales side of the product. As media ownership rules are relaxed, large companies are focusing less on the public service/public interest aspect than they are in the streamlining of operations in order to maximize revenue. The only TRUE beneficiaries of the relaxing of media ownership rules are the owners and major shareholders of the large media corporations. The September 11th tragedy and the recent "war" with Iraq are prime examples of why this is a bad idea. Clear Channel Communications restricted their stations on what they could and could not do to raise funds for the relief drive after September 11th. 1200+ radio stations, their employees, and the local public that they are supposed to serve were limited in their actions due to the corporate policies of one company and its executives. During the "war" with Iraq, I'm sure there were restrictions placed on the programmers of individual stations as to whether they could continue to play the Dixie Chicks after one of the artists made a remark about the president. Before making this major mistake, I suggest that the commission get out of the office, away from the lobbyists, STOP TAKING FREE TRIPS PAID FOR BY THE VERY COMPANIES THEY ARE SUPPOSEDLY REGULATING, regardless of the reason and actually investigate how these media companies REALLY operate. Trust me, I've been there...and I know.

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